



U.S. Army North (Fifth Army)

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Press Release

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ARNORTH to oversee military wildland fire ground response operation in California

SAN ANTONIO, Texas – At the request of the National Interagency Fire Center, approximately 200 U.S. Army Soldiers will support a wildland fire ground response operation in Northern California. U.S. Army North (Fifth Army), U.S. Northern Command's Joint Force Land Component Command, will oversee the military ground operation in support of federal and state efforts.

"We are proud to support the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service in their effort to suppress the fires in Northern California," said Lt. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, ARNORTH and JFLCC commander. "The Soldiers who will assist in this mission are highly-trained, and they are well-equipped with all of the protective gear needed to keep them safe, to include in a COVID-19 environment."

The supporting unit, the 14th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, I Corps, from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, will assist the U.S. Forest Service with wildland fire response efforts in the Mendocino National Forest.

Over the weekend, Soldiers from the battalion were fitted for personal protective equipment, including fire retardant clothing, boots, gloves and hard hats, and began training, including on the use of fire shelters, at their home station. The Soldiers will deploy to Northern California tomorrow to conduct additional training and fireline certification prior to employment on the August Complex in the Mendocino National Forest.

"Our Soldiers work every day to be ready to respond to our nation's call, whether contributing to joint force solutions in the Indo-Pacific region or assisting the lead federal agency and U.S. Army North to suppress fires right here in the United States," said Lt. Gen. Randy A. George, I Corps and JBLM commander.

The Southern Area Blue Team, a National Interagency Type 1 Incident Management Team, is in command of the August Complex, which began as 37 lightning-ignited fires on August 17. According to the U.S. Forest Service, the fire has burned more than 221,000 acres and the fire perimeter is currently 18 percent contained.

The JFLCC, through USNORTHCOM, is the primary Department of Defense organization for coordinating defense support of civil authorities to help federal partners, like NIFC, respond to natural disasters.

For additional information, contact ARNORTH Public Affairs office at usarmy.jbsa.arnorth.mbx.pao-media-operations@mail.mil or 210-428-9835.